DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 367 EA 027 568

AUTHOR English, Fenwick W.
TITLE Promising Directions in Case-Problem- and Narrative-Based Teaching in Educational Administration.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; Critical Theory; *Educational Administration; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Scientific Attitudes; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Metanarratives; *Positivism; *Postmodernism

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that case-based and problem-based approaches to teaching educational administration are inherently anchored in positivist notions of science. Both approaches are embedded in prepartitioned landscapes, or "metanarratives." The metanarrative world view rejects the premise that there is one way to view the discipline and that students should ruthlessly deconstruct each of the metanarratives. The field of educational administration should be viewed as containing different kinds of metanarratives or stories. Implications for educational administration include: (1) Educational administrators have a responsiblity to be intellectually honest about their enunciative field; (2) the "scientific" label should be eliminated from our discourse; and (3) inquiry in the discipline should be more contextually dependent. (Contains 30 references.) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
F.W. English
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

ED 396 367

PROMISING DIRECTIONS IN CASE-PROBLEM-,AND NARRATIVE-BASED TEACHING IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Session 7.03

American Education Research Association
Invited Paper
New York, New York

Stories and Metanarratives in Educational Administration

Fenwick W. English
Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Indiana University-Purdue University
Kettler Hall
Fort Wayne, Indiana
46805-1499

[not for quotation without permission from the author]

April 8, 1996

EA 027 568

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

At the outset the three alternatives posed by the title of this session are not comparable. Both case-based and problem-based approaches have a behavioral world view built into them that are firmly anchored to positivistic notions of science and compatible corollary notions of derivative, acceptable "research". Both approaches are chiefly concerned with matters of effectiveness and efficiency, to the exclusion of questions of values, character and morality or human interiority (Greenfield, 1993, pp. 138-140).

For example, Halpin (1957) used Pepinsky, Pepinsky and Pavlik's (1956) definition of a problem in educational administration as one "used to represent the actor's conception of the [response to the] situation and of his stake in it. The problem of the actor can be defined as a perceived stimulus situation where the actor feels impelled to modify it in order to realize some desired outcome" (p.163). Problem-based approaches de-emphasize people and emphasize analytical skills in order to resolve "a designated stimulus situation" (Halpin, 1957, p. 162).

Case-based approaches were developed by UCEA over thirty years ago in their famous "in-basket tasks" which were allegedly "typical," i.e., context free (Miller, 1965, p. 534; Murphy, 1992, pp.66-7). It was assumed that the context could be controlled or reduced to a single linear commonality. From this perspective personal variables could be studied, grouped and ranked without being dependent on

the "what-ifs" embedded in context (Boyan, 1988, pp.79-80). When context is sanitized, the researcher does not have to confront the impact of culture and gender on decision-making, mistakenly believing they are also "controlled," and thus "objectified." The reality is quite different, however. Both culture, gender and power relationships are situationally embedded, contextually dependent variables, leading to Foucault's concept of "power-knowledge", i.e., that power precedes meaning" (Hoskin, 1991, p.30).

Such positivistic views of alleged "neutrality," amount to what Outhwaite (1991) has labeled the "double hermeneutic" regarding interpretation. By neutralizing context, the researcher has created "a pre-interpreted world" prior to data generation where the "meaning-frames is a very condition of that which it seeks to analyse, namely human social conduct" (Giddens, 1976, p.158).

Not only are positivistic researchers blind to their own pre-interpreted world, their "research" freezes social and political practices contained in the contexts they have "objectified". The status quo is perpetuated (Hoy, 1991, p. 60). Foucault (1965) described such practices as "themes" which partitioned the field of observation into landscapes. The landscapes organized subsequent human experience (pp. 130-1). Even contemporary treatises on "reflective practice" depend on prior landscapes existing to shape definitions of procedural correctness and may be behavioral/positivistic in origin(see Osterman and Kottkamp, 1993). The use of

"clinical faculty," e.g. field practitioners as partners, rests heavily on traditional concepts of both problems and acceptable practices to resolve them (see Ogawa and Pounder, 1993; Hart, 1993). Clinical faculty reside in a "clinic," i.e., a school. As such, truth is to be "discovered" in these sites and applied by clinicians to judge whether certain actions on the part of neophytes would solve or resolve generic "situations". Such a practice is decidedly deterministic, and as Foucault (1994) points out, the clinic is projected to the same plane as truth (p. 56). It is not difficult to see why schools cannot become "better" if by that term it means doing more of the same more intensely.

Both case-based and problem-based approaches to educational administration are embedded in pre-partitioned landscapes or metanarratives. Often they are not explicated nor recognized by their advocates. The metanarratives-based world view explicitly rejects the premise that there is "one" manner of viewing the discipline which can or should be pre-imminent, and instead posits that the student should become familiar to all of the world views lying behind inquiry, including the idea that each of the metanarratives should be ruthlessly de-constructed and exposed.

Looking at the field of educational administration as containing different kinds of metanarratives or stories represents one way of resolving some of the problems raised by post-modern analyses.

There is a tripartite set of positions employed in asserting that the field should be viewed as one containing different kinds of stories. The first is to register a disclaimer that any method is "scientific" while others are not, i.e., enabling that method or procedure to become a metanarrative or a privileged story above questioning (Cherryholmes, 1988, p.11). The second is to come to understand how the field has been shaped by privileged positions or metanarratives which lend themselves to continuing to honor certain assumptions and postures as more desirable than others. Such biases are largely hidden in the transformations within a discourse (Foucault, 1972, p. 172). They are somewhat revealed by what manuscripts are rejected by certain journals, what topics of discourse are accepted for discussion at sessions like these and which ones are not.

The contestation is over the grounds that comprise the accepted arena for discourse. The dispute is how one draws "boundary conditions" (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 137). In the past as now, certain positions have been rejected at the outset as "inappropriate" for discussion (for a review see Davies and Foster,1994, pp.62-8; Capper, 1995, pp.285-298). The most familiar is to reject an alternative because it is not "science" or "unscientific". That negation rests on the assumption that there is a common "world-view" undergirding the idea of science which, according to Feyerabend (1993)

is, "either a metaphysical hypothesis trying to anticipate a future unity, or a pedagogical fake" (p. 245).

The third position is to reject the idea that theories can be compared against one another and the "superior" one selected (the idea of "coherentist" criteria, see Evers and Lakomski, 1991, p.37), or even that there is the possibility of a common field leading to "theoretical pluralism" (Griffiths, 1995, pp. 300-309). Both positions assume a synchrony that is based on a false concept of linearity (derived from language use) and sequential historicity suspended in static, timeless relationships which are an artifact of analysis (Foucault, 1971, pp.166-177).

Post modern analyses in educational administration have posed these dilemmas for the field:

- challenged the differentiation between oppositional terms upon which educational administration was originally grounded (viz. objective-subjective, scientific-non-scientific, see Willower, 1994, p.5) and therefore its definitional/organizational field in order to privilege itself within the university curriculum (English, 1995, p.204);
- exposed all methods as containing significant bias, e.g. the case study itself and so-called problem-based teaching (there are no methods free from definitional grounds which are not biased, or there are no "facts" which can be separated from the theories which spawned them). Case studies and

problem based teaching are not "neutral" activities.

- pointed out that the use of "facts" or "terms" from one metanarrative cannot be allowed to discredit other narratives because the terms from one theory are not only embedded in it, but are not found in another theory (the concept of incommensurability of theories) (Feyerabend,1993, p. 166). If one allows the terms of one theory to be used to judge others, the status quo is always heavily favored to prevail, i.e., older theories always win.

Stories and Metanarratives Based Teaching

To approach teaching educational administration as consisting of underlying "grand theories," or metanarratives means that the professor is committed to no particular grand theory or world view. Instead, the allegiance of the professor is to enable the student to come to understand how the field has been shaped by the underlying perspectives that led to dominance and subjugation of different perspectives. While these can be traced chronologically, the ebb and flow of ideas regarding dominance are not clean divisions. Remnants of past ideas can be reborn under new guises, as for example the re-emergency of trait theory as "habits" (Covey, 1991). The field is accentuated by ruptures, dispersions and reversals. While there may be

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

history as an imposition of synchrony, there is no presumption of progress implicit in its explication.

The student of educational administration should see the flow of grand theories as contestation for privileged grounds, status and rewards within and without the university. There is not only a politics of educational administration in practice, but a politics of how that practice is defined, researched, and discussed. The discourse within educational administration should be grounded on the questions rendered by Foucault (1972) when probing for the formation of an enunciative modality:

1. "...Who is speaking? Who among the totality of speaking individuals, is accorded the right to use this sort of language? Who is qualified to do so?" (p. 50). Who benefits from this discourse and how does one know it is true?
2. Where are the institutional sites from which discourse emanates and is legitimatized, applied? What are the boundaries of acceptable "problem" definitions or "case studies"? Who is qualified to define them? Answer them?

The presentation of the field of educational administration as a field was tried with the idea of typology, a categorization of types (English, 1994, p. 100). The student was presented with a rough division of ten possible metanarratives or grand theories in which Foucault's elements of an enunciative modality were present.

They were as follows:

Typological Level 1: Pre-Scientific Ideas

Typological Level 2: Protoscientific Views

Typological Level 3: Pseudoscientific Views

Typological Level 4: Early Scientific Concepts

Typological Level 5: The Metanarrative of Behaviorism

Typological Level 6: Transition Works Combining Behaviorism and Structuralism

Typological Level 7: Broad Fields View/Situational Leadership

Typological Level 8: Structuralism

Typological Level 9: Feminist and Critical Theory

Typological Level 10: Post-modernism

In the explication of these grand theories, progress is not assumed to be a result of their utilization. The shaping of the field into a typology of grand narratives does assume what Foucault (1972) called coexistence (p. 57), i.e., a field of presence, a field of concomitance, and a field of memory. A field of concomitance contains relationships among objects which exist simultaneously but are not necessarily in the same domain. The latter field consists of statements no longer discussed or accepted as truthful, but which are necessary to understand transformation, continuity or discontinuity of ideas within it.

Thus, the use of a typology of metanarratives does not exist to invalidate one or another world view, but to grasp the significant differences and to understand the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

implications of work [research] which may occur within and across them. Whereas positivistic science is aimed at methodological primacy based on claims of superior procedures leading to a position of privilege and exclusion of "otherist" views, this claim is explicitly rejected in viewing the field as a contestation of metanarratives.

The Use of Stories To Understand Leadership

Quite recently, Howard Gardner (1995) offered a view of leadership as simple storytelling. Leaders engage in story telling to followers that compete for primacy. Followers "shop" for stories that resonate with them. "Counter" stories are offered by oppositional leaders. Leadership is thus portrayed as an unfolding social drama (see Starratt, 1993). The most basic kind of story told by leaders involves the question of identity.

Gardner rejects behaviorism as an adequate metanarrative to understand leadership, and employs cognitive psychology which deals with mental images and symbolic representations. He further rejects the so-called behavioral science views of leadership as concerned with power or policy development (pp. 16-17) as adequate to understand the importance of leaders or in grasping what they really do.

Gardner presents a series of "case studies" of leaders. These are presented quite differently than the usual presentation of case study methodologies (see Yin, 1984, pp.140-5). First Gardner acknowledges that leadership occurs "within the minds of individuals who live in a culture," and

that the stories leaders tell are culturally specific rather than generic (p. 22). Secondly, Gardner acknowledges that leadership involves subordination, i.e., hierarchies. His explanation is that this phenomenon is part of the history of primates. Primates imitate one another with Alpha males being dominant.

Gardner brings to his concept of leadership the idea that storytelling involves the mind of a five year old since at this age of human development a child "already possesses the basic ingredients necessary for entering into a leader-follower relationship" (p.25). One of the basic ingredients is a series of "scripts" or "scenarios" as cognitive frames which are the basis for followership responsiveness to potential leaders' stories.

While Gardner's case studies differ therefore from generally accepted positivistic research traditions because they are contextually grounded in culture and a specific historic period, Gardner uses them to extrapolate what he terms "transcendent" meanings which are de-contextualized. He admits he is not a postmodernist in doing so (p. 63). He also concedes that his leaders are nearly all modern and drawn from American or Western European contexts. "I fully expect that studies of other leaders....--will undermine certain generalizations and give rise to others" (p. 297). So is Gardner admitting the fallibility of his case study generalizations out of context and time? He appears to minimize its importance and insists on developing "robust

characterizations" based on "the same set of lenses..applied to additional members of the class of leaders, broadly defined" (p. 297). The metanarrative underlying Gardner's proposition remains positivistic science despite some important new wrinkles.

Is Refutation the Basis for Affirmation?

Can it be argued that a denial constitutes an affirmation? Habermas (1990) constructs an argument for a kind of temporary transcendental position on this basis. Calling it the "performative contradiction," (p. 80) he affirms that a kind of transcendental claim can be made on a line of argumentation that follows the logic of [in this case] there are no metanarratives which should be considered supreme above any others in educational administration. Does this denial create such a metanarrative?

In this case no metanarrative (as a positivity) is being proffered. No grand theory is being put forth to reconcile the differences and create complimentarities. It is assumed that the metanarratives are incommensurable, that the terms and definitions of one are self-contained and not applicable in a cross-metanarrative fashion so that common fields by which one could assess them do not exist.

Implications for Educational Administration As a Discipline in Universities

The implications for educational administration appear to be these.

1) We Have a Responsibility to be Intellectually Honest About Our Enunciative Field

There is a long tradition of denial regarding the hidden biases of inquiry in educational administration. The allegedly "neutral" practices of inquiry observe no tradition of neutrality. They are subjectivities along with other subjectivities (metanarratives).

"Administrative science" possesses its own form of dominance and patterns of privilege as arbitrary as many other forms which could exist, or as arbitrary as earlier forms of inquiry it displaced. Programs which do not expose students to rigorous forms of criticism of our modality for discourse are preserving a false sense of propriety. They are intellectually naive or dishonest.

2) The "Scientific" Label Applied to Forms of Inquiry Should Be Eliminated from Our Discourse

The delineation of "scientific" versus "non-scientific" terms emanate from a metanarrative in which the binary opposites are embedded and part of a form of argumentation that renders all other forms less valuable, and one could add less rigorous (when the world view itself defines the nature of rigor in terms most favorable to it).

Binary oppositional terms have been shown to rest on presumed linguistic stabilities which are non-existent. Language is the condition of discovery itself. Reality cannot exist prior to the utilization of language (Evans,

1991, p. 35). Science is also language dependent and with it binary opposites. If such opposites collapse so do the categories which contain truth.

3) Inquiry in the Discipline Should be More Contextually Dependent

Research in educational administration has been aimed at producing generalizations which can be spread over a wide variety of independent, assumed commensurate situations. Positivistic science de-contextualized situations so that certain lawlike statements could be developed.

It was assumed that de-contextualized inquiry would produce a curriculum that was distinctly superior in preparing school administrators. But it has been a failure to do so, for as Keegan(1987) put it bluntly, "Context....is all" (p.3).

Inquiry in school administration should be seen as much more contextually dependent than in the past. When the categories on which quantitative generalizations have been de-constructed, one is left with a context dependent description.

More emphasis should be placed on the dynamic interchange between context and decision-making located within a culture, hierarchies of dependencies, and leader/follower narratives.

References

Boyan, N.J. (1988) Describing and explaining administrator behavior, in N. J. Boyan (ed.) Handbook of research on educational administration. New York: Longman, 77-98.

Capper, C. (1995) An otherist poststructural perspective of the knowledge base in educational administration, in R. Donmoyer, M. Imber and J.J. Scheurich (eds.) The knowledge base in educational administration. Albany: SUNY Press, 285-299.

Cherryholmes, C. (1988) Power and criticism: poststructural investigations in education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Davies, J.S. and Foster, W. (1994) A postmodern analysis of educational administration, in S.J. Maxcy (ed.) Post modern School Leadership. Westport, CT: Praeger, 61-70.

English,F. W. (1994) Theory in educational administration. New York: Harper Collins.

English, F.W. (1995) Toward a reconsideration of biography and other forms of life writing as a focus for teaching educational administration. Educational Administration Quarterly, 31;2, 203-223.

Evans, J. C. (1991) Strategies of Deconstruction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Evers, C.W. and Lakomski, G. (1991) Knowing educational administration. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Feyerabend, P. (1993) Against method. London: Verso.

Foucault, M. (1965) Madness and civilization. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1972) The archaeology of knowledge. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1994) The birth of the clinic. New York: Vintage Books.

Gardner, H. (1995) Leading minds. New York: Harper Collins.

Giddens, A. (1976) New rules of sociological method. London: Cambridge University Press.

Greenfield, T. (1993) Greenfield on Educational Administration, T. Greenfield and P. Ribbins (eds.) New York: Routledge.

Griffiths, D.E. (1995) Theoretical pluralism in educational administration, in R. Donmoyer, M. Imber, and J.J. Scheurich (eds.) The knowledge base in educational administration. Albany: SUNY Press, 300-9.

Habermas, J. (1990) Moral consciousness and communicative action. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Halpin, A.W. (1957) A paradigm for research on administrative behavior, in R.F. Campbell and R.T. Gregg (eds.) Administrative behavior in education. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers. 155-199.

Hart, A. W. (1993) A design studio for reflective practice, in P Hallinger, K. Leithwood and J. Murphy (eds.) Cognitive perspectives on educational leadership. New York: Teachers College Press, 213-230.

Hoskin, K. (1991) Foucault under examination: The crypto-educationalist unmasked, in S.J. Ball (ed.) Foucault and education: Disciplines and knowledge. London: Routledge. 29-56.

Hoy, D. (1991) Jacques Derrida, in Q. Skinner (ed.) The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 41-64.

Keegan, J. (1987) The mask of command. New York: Viking.

Miller, V. (1965) The Public Administration of American School Systems. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Murphy, J. (1992) The landscape of leadership preparation: Reframing the education of school administrators. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Osterman, K.F. and Kottkamp, R.B. (1993) Reflective practice for educators. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Outhwaite, W. (1991) Hans-George Gadamer, in Q. Skinner (ed.) The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 21-40.

Pepinsky, H.B., Pepinsky, P.N. and Pavlik, W.B. (1965) Motivational factors in individual and group productivity: I. Successful task accomplishment as related to task-relevant personal beliefs. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Research Foundation.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Starratt, R.J. (1993) The drama of leadership. London: The Falmer Press.

Willower, D.J. (1994) Educational administration: Inquiry, values, practice. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Yin, R.K. (1984) Case study research: design and methods. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

The Author:
Phone: 219-481-5406
Fax: 219-481-6083
Internet: english@smtplink.ipfw.indiana.edu